



January 18, 2022

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The Honorable Howard Pearl, Chairman
Committee on Environment and Agriculture
New Hampshire House of Representatives
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to express the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests' support for House Bill 1049 and House Bill 1454, two important bills that would regulate the siting and construction of new solid waste landfills in our state.

One of New Hampshire's distinguishing traits is the State's deep natural beauty. This landscape, especially the forests and water resources, contributes to the environmental and economic health and well-being we enjoy. The protection and conservation of these natural areas is the result of a diverse partnership of public agencies, non-profit organizations and private citizens. We view the intent behind both bills as part of the State's responsibility to steward these natural resources for the long-term public good of all the residents of New Hampshire. We wish to thank the bill's sponsors for their introduction and support of them.

As you know, in 2019 the Committee to Study Recycling Streams and Solid Waste Management in New Hampshire (the HB 617 Study Committee) extensively studied how the State can better manage its solid waste stream. The Committee noted that state law (RSA149-M) established a hierarchy of solid waste disposal solutions. The priority approach to this challenge is to reduce the amount of waste the State produces. The least preferred method is to dispose of it in landfills.

While the HB 617 Study Committee report acknowledged the issue of solid waste management is complex, it also pointed out that "land used for disposal has other worthwhile uses" and that "most solid waste, including much plastic, construction and demolition debris and innumerable other types of waste, remain entombed in perpetuity". Landfills are known to contain toxic substances like volatile organic compounds (VOCs), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and heavy metals. In short, converting open space into a dumping ground for unwanted and dangerous material is not a wise use of the land.

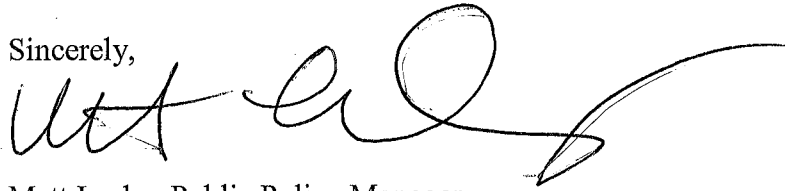
We are especially supportive of HB 1454's focus on limiting or prohibiting the siting of landfills within a defined distance of groundwater sources. Given the threats some communities across the state are facing to their local drinking water supplies from such problems as PFAS

contamination, New Hampshire must prioritize policies that better protect these critical water resources. The passage of HB 1454 will help to accomplish that goal.

However, we recognize that the modern economy will continue to generate waste. As the State undertakes initiatives that promote source reduction, recycling, reuse, and composting over waste disposal, it will also need to review the role that solid waste landfills may play towards addressing our solid waste disposal challenges. HB 1049 will be helpful towards meeting that issue particularly by having the Study Committee consider practices that will reduce pressure on landfill capacity.

For these reasons, we would encourage the Committee to pass both HB 1049 and HB 1454. Thank you again for accepting this testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Leahy", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Matt Leahy, Public Policy Manager
Society for the Protection of NH Forests